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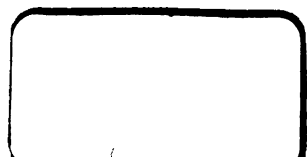


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RHYMES OF A
TROPIC TRAMP

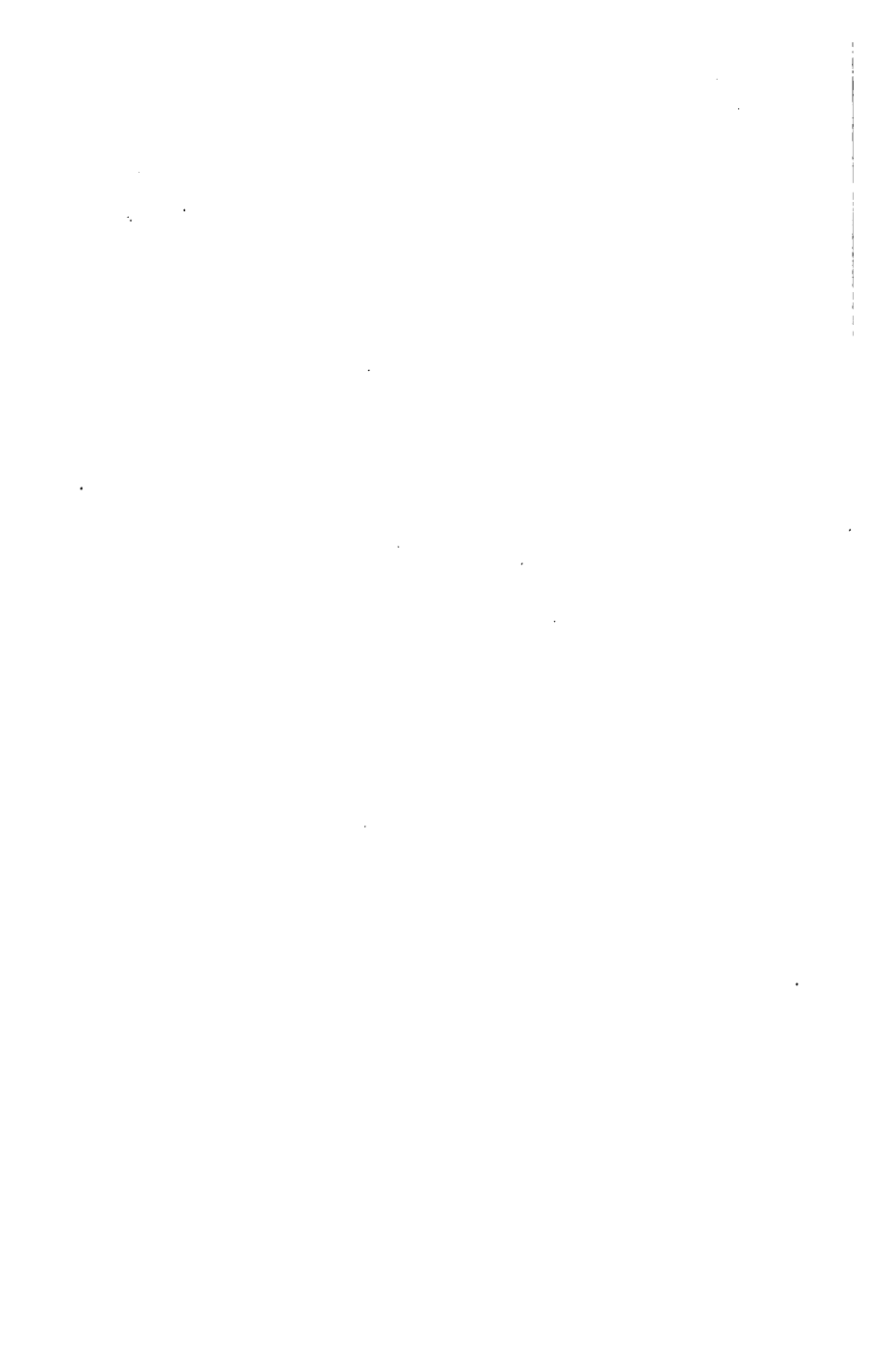


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RHYMES OF A TROPIC TRAMP

Rhymes of a Tropic Tramp

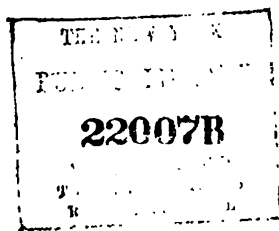
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GEORGE GATLIN

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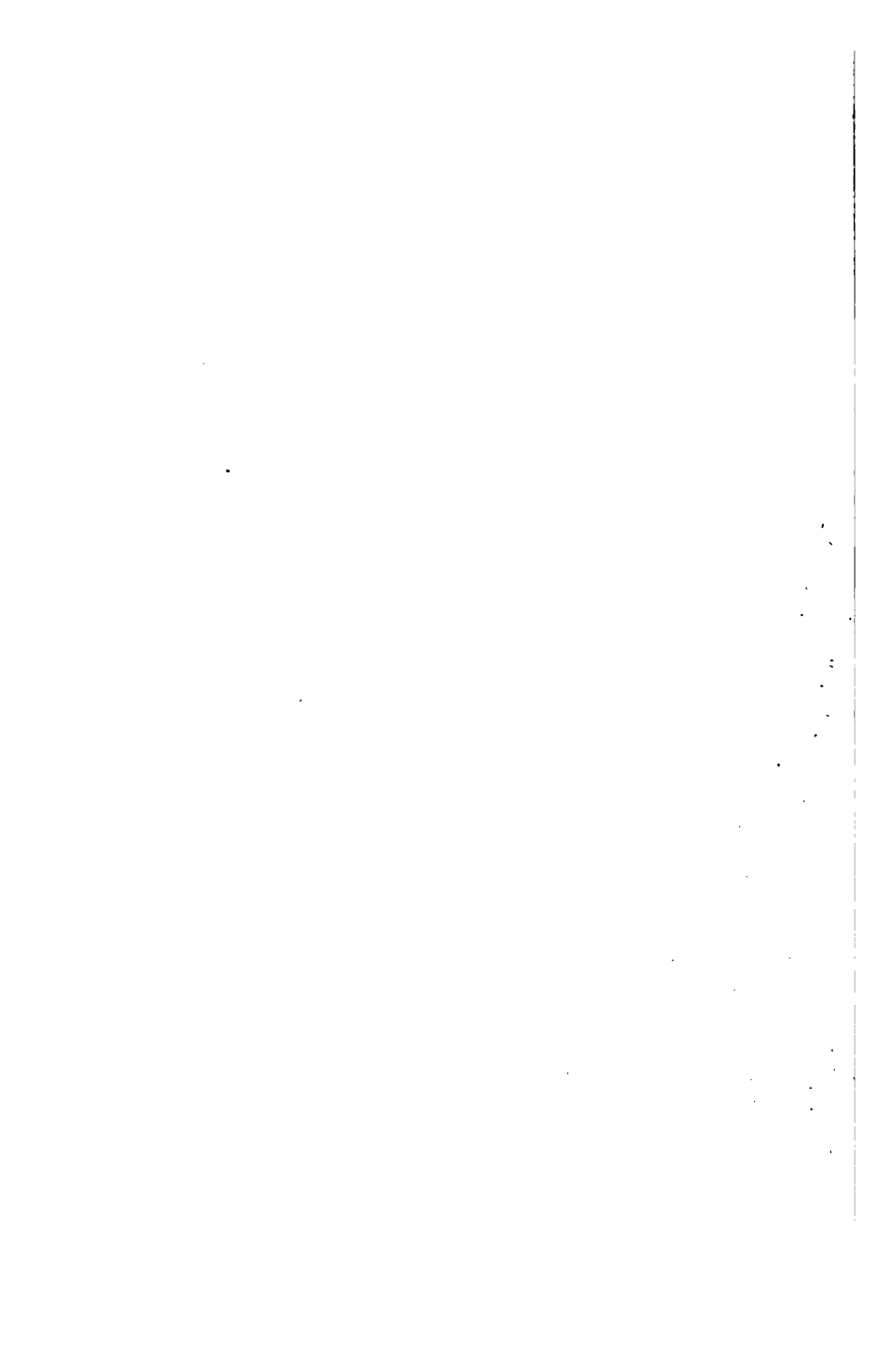
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TO A. V. S.

*Friend of mine, do you remember
The cliffs of Mazatlan,
The bay of Olas Altas,
Its stretch of silvery sand,
Our stop in Sinaloa,
On the way to Yucatan?*



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RHYMES OF A TRAGIC TRAMP

THE SONGS I SING

I SING no songs of Ancient Rome,
Since "Arms and the Man" one Virgil sang.
I sing as I will, dark moods and light,
And what's your wrong is maybe my right,
At least as I understand.

I sing no songs except in minor tone,
And those less crude are maybe overbold.
I sing songs different for the few,
And some for those who never knew
The sting of brain and soul.

I love my life, my work, and liberty,
Therefore the songs I sing are of myself.
Personal I am, and proud almost,
For I who sing am guest and host.
These lines prelude my varied rhymes.

BACK TO TROPIC ISLANDS

I'M shipping in the morning, tell the chief I was
shanghied,

And with copy, ink, and proof-sheets I am done;
When I told myself I'd settled down I knew that I had
lied,

For I'd rather comb the beaches in the sun.

We'll be ploughing back tomorrow, south, for indigo
and rice,

To the Tropics, to the jungle life I know,
And I'm blowing on my uppers to an island paradise,
Where the master of a fruit-ship left me years ago.

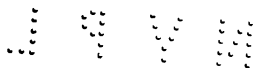
He left me on the flood tide, with my bare feet in the
sands,

But I didn't give a damn to see him go,
For I had a shell-and-pea game to work the black-and-
tans,

And I'd found a sort of Bimini, you know.

I wonder if that island girl still loves and waits for me,
Wearing flowers of the jungle in her hair;

I know she tried to strangle me in blazing jealousy,
'Twas no wonder, (but a necklace made it square).



She wore a gay silk turban on her pretty little head,
With a band of olive skin above her hips,
Between the Spanish jacket and the Burma skirt of red,
And the Tropics wove a spell upon her lips.

She'll be within the jungle where the glow-worm beetle
gleams

And sweeps so like a flame among the trees,
I'll hear her voice caressing in my opiate colored
dreams,

As she holds my tired head on her knees.

I will sit again enraptured in that moisture laden air,
Where the jungle drips and glistens through the riffs,
And smell the perfume 'round us from the orchids in
her hair,

And swing my shoe-cramped feet in the mists.

I'll slip into the jungle when the sun is burning bright,

Where I'll eat again those brittle coca leaves,
And in a hut of palms in the hazy, mellow light
I can while away long hours as I please.

TO A FORTY-FOUR

FRIEND of the old days, the red days, my free days,
Most prized of my treasures, you old-time forty-
four;

You hang, six-notched and deadly, trigger-tied, and
ready,

Though the old hip-shootin' hombres are riding in no
more.

Friend of the new days, effete days, my last days,

No killers show six-guns as in the old, red West.

You hang, man-sized and heavy, old-fashioned now,
already,

For the boxed-up automatic can be toted in one's vest.

You of my old friends, my true friend, my tried friend;

No misused, shining Colt's-gun for the moving-picture
plays;

You hang, sand-scratched and steady, lightly oiled and
ready,

Fit tribute from a rider to his friend of desert days.

ON THE ISLANDS

TEN years on the Islands
And you're mad;
Not a spark of decency —
Oh, it's sad;
Can't recall one sober day
That you've had;
You've let the tropics get you
And you're bad.

Ten years on the Islands
And you fell,
Hardly conscious of surrender
To the spell.
You're eaten up with leprosy,
Traders tell,
You're a comber of the beaches —
Gone to hell.

Ten years on the Islands,
It's too long
To preserve one's sense of right
And of wrong.
The tropic spell is gentle
But it's strong,
It feeds the soul on lotus
Till it's gone.

REINCARNATION

DEATH will come and Death will Pass,
Out of the Night, the Day;
Each Human Soul contains in itself
The Power of Growth and Decay.

Life will come and Life will Pass,
Out of the Dark, the Light;
And in a Realm of Radiance
Blind Souls receive their Sight.

YUMA TOWN

I WANT to go back to Yuma town,
Where painted desert and mountains call,
Riding again through the desert hills
As the purple shadows fall.

I left a horse with a squatter there,
Winner in many a rodeo list,
High-strung, bottom, sense and looks,
And a leg like a woman's wrist.

I left a girl in the blue foothills,
Wonder of women, child of the sun,
And many an evening she rode with me,
Night-herding stars when the day was done.

I want to go back to Yuma town,
Not lured as once by desert gold,
But seeking three things I left out there,
A girl, a horse, and a rider's soul.

MAKE HASTE, CYNTHIA

MAKE haste, Cynthia, for the morning dies
And the evening of your realization comes;
Oh, make haste, for the springtime flies,
Old pleasures pale and gathered flowers die.

Make haste, Cynthia, ere you be too late,
And the shadows come, and falling hover near;
Oh, make haste, 'tis now your noon of life,
And when your spirit goes your body dies.

Make haste, Cynthia, for the wrinkles come,
And eyes once soft grow hard in sterner air;
Oh, make haste, while yet you have the strength,
I beg you, Cynthia, once again — make haste.

TRAMPS OF THE NORTH

TRAMPS of the north, the tropic sun is shining
In the semi-wild parks of southern Mexico;
Tramps of the north, the summer fruit is ripening,
And in the warm sun the green gardens grow.

Out of the north the birds of passage flying,
Gave a fair warning that golden days were done;
Here to the south, where tropic life is calling,
From northern Alberta the snow-geese have come.

Down below Cancer our home birds are singing,
Sweet-throated, brilliant, they feast in this clime;
Whenever they leave you should follow their winging,
For they lead to a place of eternal springtime.

Here in the tropics there's simple ways of "mouching,"
Easy approach to the "friends from back home,"
Gendarmes are gracious, while natives too indulging
Make this a Mecca where tropic tramps roam.

Tramps of the north, there's "hand-outs" past believing,
Even the peon divides his scant repast,
It's beans and tortillos, but if you eat smiling
A half of it's yours as long as it lasts.

Here in the plaza there's peace in one's reposing,
No whistlings or watchmen awake from pleasant sleep,
No laws are enforced that prevent one reclining
By night-sticks of bluecoats rapping one's feet.

Here in the tropics the "cup that cheers" is flowing,
In a thousand cantinas of this elysian land;
You in the north, where winter's winds are blowing,
Must mix up your "alki" in a battered tin can.

Tramps of the north, the southern bands are playing
Bizet's airs from Carmen and Spanish, gypsy stuff;
Tramps of the north, though home fires are burning,
Charred ends of crossties tell your way is rough.

"MAD, NAKED BLAKE"

MAD Blake, mystic Blake,
Singing songs that wake
Fairy visions dreamers see;
Music of a comet choir
Flashes in the golden fire
Of enraptured poetry.

Mad Blake, mystic Blake,
Singing songs that make
For your madness recompense;
Children laughing in the sky
As the trooping stars go by
In your Songs of Innocence.

Mad Blake, mystic Blake,
Writing happy songs that break
On tired ears exquisitely;
Singing even as death lies,
Strange, wild music improvised
In your last mad ecstasy.

PRAYER FOR A PRODIGAL

JESUS, gentle son of Mary,
Jesus, hear a mother's plea;
Guide my boy in all his wanderings,
Keep him strong and clean for me.

Jesus Savior, son of Mary,
Master Thou of winds and sea,
Guide my boy in pathways Holy,
Guide him home at last to me.

HOME

ROAD-KID, comet, royal-tramp,
Wanderers bred-in-the-bone;
Oh, a gay-cat sings when clicking rails
Hum the tune of "Home, Sweet Home."

Road-kid, comet, royal-tramp,
Blown-in-the-glass they roam,
Tracking across the wide, wide world,
When the goal of it all is — home.

THE CONCORD HILLS

THE old trees, the rough old trees,
No other background fills,
The mellow picture memory paints
Of home in the Concord hills.

For those hills are old home hills,
Linked with dreams of rowdy youth;
The square dance, blind Tom calling,
"Swing your pardners, all salute."

The iron spring, that dear old spring,
Where sweethearts went each day;
The beech trees, carved with initials,
Monogramed in our bashful way.

The years pass but the memory lasts,
And the longing cannot be stilled,
Till I see again my old home,
That home in the Concord hills.

TO A CHINESE GIRL

SAY, little China girl,
Quit your kidding, let me go;
Ah Kim wonders why I stay,
It's because you're smiling so.

Say, little China girl,
Whence such charm and mystery?
Dainty, strange, and un-Chinese,
Slant eyes smiling after me.

Say, little China girl,
Ah Kim's kid of scarce fourteen,
I'm no prince you're looking for,
I'm a — well kid — keep your dream.

.

Say, little China girl,
Ten years gone, across the sea,
Wonder if your prince has come,
For your smile still follows me.

THE LEPER COLONY OF CULION

THREE thousand men would cry "Unclean!",
Were they bound by Levitical bond,
Three thousand lepers waiting death,
On the Island of Culion.

Bamboo and palms to shelter them,
Exiled there whence none can flee,
The leper island lies among
The thousand isles of the China Sea.

Three thousand men who wistful look
On Holy Ground where peace is sure,
Three thousand lepers pray release
In a merciful death—the only cure.

Bamboo and palms to shelter them,
Deadlines mark where they are free;
The forbidden city lies half-hid,
Across the world on the China Sea.

BANZAI NIPPON

WE pray thee, Gods of our Fathers,
Keep faith with our native land;
For we of Nippon are a people, Lords,
Ten thousand years, Japan.

We pray, old Gods, for the honor
To die for our native land;
Though we seek only peace for the Empire,
Ten thousand years, Japan.

IN A CABARET

YOU poor little kid of the cabaret,
Dancing the midnight hours away,
Hiding the hurts you dare not show,
Pretending a joy you cannot know;
Off with your tights, come to the fields,
Out in the open where nature heals
The tired ones who go.

You poor little kid of the cabaret,
Doing your stunt as violins play,
Fluttering where the bright lights shine,
Seeking there what you cannot find;
Off to the woods, come to the plains,
Dance in the sun and wind and rain,
And leave all this behind.

You poor little kid of the cabaret,
I'm waiting to hear what you will say,
Waiting to see if you will go
Where birds are singing and clear brooks flow;
Off to the fields, this is your chance,
To freely live and to gayly dance
Where little flowers grow.

You poor little kid of the cabaret,
Youth is the price you'll have to pay,
Unless you break the night-life's hold,
Going away for the good of your soul;
Off to the hills, out in the air,
Finding the joys that God put there,
Wealth that laughs at gold.

MOTHER OF A SOLDIER

GOOD-BYE, lad. There's nothing I'll be needing.
(Brave mother! She smiles with heart that's
bleeding.)

Write, lad; tell me when you are leading
Troops to glory and to victory in France.

Good-bye, lad. I'm proud that you are going.
(Brave mother! She keeps hot tears from flowing.)

Go, lad; I hear the bugles blowing
And I'm glad I have a son to send to France.

June 1918.

ROMANY SONG

I WANT to see, to see again
The Romany patteran,
Familiar sign of place and time,
Cross of our love in gypsy land.

I want to go, to go again
In moonlight and in sun,
Till my heart is rife with joyous life,
And the forty seas are one.

I want to be, to be again
Where tropic trade winds blew;
The South lures back, the white sea track
Calls me over the world anew.

I want to hear, to hear again
The Romany songs and lore,
To turn my face and find a place
With a caravan once more.

THE ORCHID HUNTER

SOMEWHERE down there, where the Tropic calls,
And lily-palms drip as the darkness falls,
The orchids bloom, and here and there
Bat vampires fan through the perfumed air.

Somewhere down there, where the orchids swing
On their slender stems, a white man came;
And the air-plants lured to the jungle dim
That the Tropics had poisoned to master him.

Somewhere down there, where the insects drone
On the jungle edge, there is madness sown.
There the orchid hunter still hunts on,
And he cannot leave for his soul is gone.

Somewhere down there, where the palms grow rank,
There's a hut on stilts on a river bank;
And the Tropics brood and the jungle drips,
And white mists rise through the trees in riffs.

Somewhere down there, in that low, damp place,
The jungle grows and its feelers taste
Of the stilted house where, taught to wait,
Sits a brown-skinned girl, the hunter's mate.

Somewhere down there, where the blood grows thin,
He forgets the codes of his kith and kin,
And strings rare orchids about the neck
Of a native girl in Tehuantepec.

AN ENGINEER, BLINDED

YOU are dreaming of days that come no more,
Of trains that sweep and cross with a roar
Bridges you've swung from shore to shore.

*Never again will bridges span
Ravines and rivers by my hand.*

You have tunneled roads in the mountain side,
And fighting nature with every stride
You've reclaimed jungles where fevers hide.

*Never again will I know the feel
That comes when gangs are laying steel.*

You have tackled a sinking marsh and won,
And though they said it could n't be done
You found a route for the roads to run.

*Never again will roadbeds go
Across wet places my lines show.*

You may dream of the great jobs you have had,
The work you have done should make you glad,
Yet, I find you restless, hopeless, sad.

*Dear God! Just think of years I'll spend
And never be able to build again.*

THE OLD FRIENDS

I NEVER knew the value of my friends,
But now I know,
Old friends go.
Return, ye friends, come back again.

I never prized the virtue of the old,
Till in the new
I sought for you.
Return, ye friends, young hearts are cold.

I never knew the sting of bitter grief,
Of pain and woe,
But now I know.
Return, ye friends, come back again.

AN ARABIAN NIGHT

THERE'S a desert place where dangers lie,
For turbaned trades whose way leads by,
Where Muezzins call with a nasal cry
Mohammedans to prayer.
Hautboys blow and the tom-toms beat,
And the Zouaves idle where dancers meet,
The domino players lounge in the street,
And camel-drivers swear.

A dancer sways as the tom-toms beat,
In the sensuous, amorous dance of the East,
And my blood sings out in a fever heat,
Burning as the sun.
A girl of the Dunes with languid grace,
Whose kohl-tinted eyes gaze out in space,
Till they chance to read in my upturned face,
Hungerings begun.

The dance girl scorns the Zouaves proud,
And tom-toms beat both fast and loud,
As she pushes through the Bedouin crowd
With henna-painted hands.
With her beaded arms above her head
She dances her dreams for the hashish fed,
And pictures her tribe and the life it led
Out on the desert sands.

With eyes half closed in an ecstasy,
She shudders, quivers, and bends to my knee,
Vibrant and sensuous she clings to me,
 And lustrous eyes entice.
A gift of gold and the dance is done,
The domino games are again begun,
But I hunt my camels and wait the sun
 In Allah's paradise.

TO MY LITTLE SON

I WOULD not rob you of the joy of life,
By making smooth the path your feet must tread;
I would not shield you from its trials and strife,
Though every cross you bear, I'd bear instead.

I would not have you spoiled by unearned gold,
Resistance builds, not tasks too oft made light;
I would not have you lose what toilers hold,
The common touch, and love for what is right.

I would not guide you on the long, rough road,
And have you trusting in my helping hand;
I would not take upon myself your load,
Which you must bear, my son, to be a man.

IN THE SHADOW

IN the shadow, sunless, brightless,
In the darkness, awful, lightless,
Pass the cynic and his brood.
And they pass with eyes unseeing,
Heads bent downward, hearts unfeeling,
Searing, wasting, teaching nothing
But the mockery of virtue
And the hopelessness of hope.

Thus they pass on, ruining, blighting
Those who live and those who dying
Love the cause that gave them birth.
How they glory in the blackness,
Showing things, themselves unseeing,
Causing tears, themselves unfeeling,
Fearing nothing good or evil,
Loving nothing great or small.

In the darkness of the shadow,
Sunless, lightless, and forever
Never changing, gazing always
On the shadow ever darkening
On the dreams of priests and prophets,
On the things we hoped were true.

THE ROAD-KID RIDES

THE route of a tramp is marked and plain,
Every sign they've left I know;
I swore to myself I had settled down,
But it's spring and the "big jacks" blow.

Too fast was the life in the city,
Loud came the call to go
To my place in the hobo jungles,
With pals in the fire's red glow.

On the rods or bumpers, blinds or trucks,
Dirty and hungry and cold I may be,
But a road-kid's life is the only life,
And its spell is strong on me.

In spring or summer, north or south,
On the road with an old vag friend,
My heart sings out its joyousness
For I'm riding the blinds again.

A TOUCH OF SUN

IF you get to feeling bloody, in a mood unknown to
you,

And you try to draw your pal into a fight;

If you want to break a pardner's head and weep because
you're blue,

Better "take 'em in the arm" till you get right.

Don't wear a cap or derby if you're hiking in the sun;

Get a tall sombrero for your head;

Keep your dome well covered or your friends will have
the fun

Of cabling to the home folks that you're dead.

THE MAKIN' OF HOLY JOE

OH, we called him "Holy Joe"
Over There,
Where the allied columns bored
And our aviators soared
And the giant cannons roared,
Over There.

Oh, he found his soul in serving
Over There,
With the brave lads who, when dying,
"Went west" gamely, never sighing,
"Carry on," they'd say, and smiling,
Over There.

Oh, he dropped his saintly ways
Over There,
All the earmarks of his trade,
(Down to hell and unafraid),
Doing work the war had made
Over There.

Oh, the trenches taught true service
Over There.
In the red glare of such hate
He forgot to preach or prate,
Felt the soul within him wake,
Over There.

Oh, we took your long-faced priest
Over There,
But we brought you back a man
With a taste of hell firsthand,
Larger vision from that land
Over There.

THE DREAMERS ANSWER

DREAMERS of dreams, you call us;
You say we are in the way;
But, beloved, go thank the dreamers
For the blessings of today.

You have built great homes and cities,
And prize the work of your hands,
But you curse as idle dreamers
The ones who furnished the plans.

You call us scorers and idlers,
Fanatics, scoffers, and fools,
As your fathers damned our insolence
When we gave them churches and schools.

You fear not the cold of the winter,
You now toil day and night;
The work of the dreamers, beloved,
For we gave you heat and light.

You once were afraid of the darkness,
You knew not the use of fire,
Till the dreamers began their dreaming,
And lifted the race from the mire.

They made you a race and a people,
They lightened the weight of your load,
And there grew in time a nation,
From the seeds that dreamers sowed.

They have given you science and culture,
They taught you the use of a hoe,
And those whom you scorn as dreamers
Are the men, beloved, who know.

REST OR GO MAD

REST or go mad, you say to me?

I cannot rest, so let it be.

In madness perhaps there's really peace,

And by affliction may come release

From memory that pulls and drives,

The faint, strange dream of former lives.

Rest or go mad, you say to me?

I cannot rest till I am free,

Free from quickenings in my brain

Urging to heights I would attain,

Free from the fever heat of blood

That keeps me groveling in the mud.

Rest or go mad, you say to me?

I cannot rest while yet I see

Visions of beauty and color untold

Which kindle fires in brain and soul;

Thus seeking an outlet where none can be

The white fires burn, consuming me.

"LITTLE BOY BLUE"

"GIVE me a book for Christmas," he said;
"Give me a book, please do";
One after my heart, that smiling boy,
So I gave him "Little Boy Blue."

A grown-up now, that smiling boy,
Years passed as the years will do;
His little tin soldiers and drums are gone,
But he prizes his "Little Boy Blue."

THE HOME CALL

WILDFOWLS to the north are winging,
From lakes in the tropical sun,
With never a hint in their singing,
Till the home flight had begun.
Unsensed, the call came speeding,
As it comes to all who roam,
And the bird tramps rose from feeding,
To answer the summons of home.

There's no call like the home call,
The clear call, the heart call;
There's no call like the home call
When one is far away.

Green fields and rivers are calling,
Sweet-toned the church bells ring,
And at eve, when shadows are falling,
The old-time darkies sing.
I know where a trout stream's flowing
By the roots of a sweet-gum tree,
And it's useless to fight against going,
When the home call comes to me.

There's no spot like the home place,
The quiet place, the old place;
There's no spot like the home place
When one is far away.

Out of the past they are calling,
Home voices, compelling and strong,
And the music of it is falling
On my heart like a siren's song.
Though over the world I am straying,
Though it means recrossing the sea,
It's useless to think of staying,
When the home call comes to me.

There's no place like the home town,
The small town, the old town;
There's no place like the home town
When one is far away.

"THEY SHALL NOT PASS"

STRONG hands are tense on the sword hilt,
Spurs clink from the booted heel;
We have done with our cold neutrality,
We have given the word — and steel.

It's war! Hear the bugles proclaim it!
The die has at last been cast,
And the salt of the earth who are marching,
Have vowed, "They shall not pass."

THE WASTER SPEAKS

I HAVE attained my noon, and passed,
Alone, apart, and weak with fear;
Around my path long shadows fall,
And the day grows dark.

I have attained my noon. Too young
My sun has set, and twilight fades.
My dreams, my dreams are gone,
And hope is in the dust.

The sun has set, passed is my noon,
And evening shadows are here;
The curtains of work and love are down;
The night, the night is near.

THE TIRED SQUAD

IDLERS and tramps and remittance men,
Taking siestas on the green sod,
While fruit-ships bring from northern lands
More wearied ones for the tired squad.

Lounging and basking there in the sun,
Warming the benches the livelong day;
Mouthing their meals with the same old stall,
(Sick and stranded and broke, they say).

Tramps of the world who southward go
Where the shining sun of the tropics lure,
They swap their yarns of the wasted years,
Taking again the old rest-cure.

Idlers and tramps and remittance men,
Too tired to work or even play,
They lounge around in a flowery park
Till June rains come and drive away.

THE OLD LOVE

YOU were an old love,
A dear love, a true love,
And it's back to my old loves
My thoughts are turning now.
Tender memories are waking,
As advancing years are taking
Friends of the golden days,
The old days, my young days.

And you were my dear love,
My first love, my last love,
And it's back now to thee, love,
My heart has turned again.
Oh, ever have I loved thee,
And ever have I held thee,
The truest of my true loves,
My dear love, my old love.

TO AN AVIATOR

WHEN you've made your last flight,
And fall in the fight,
And your brave soul's sure to pass in the night,
It's proud you can be,
And clearly you'll see
That death's not as sad as living might be.

When the night's nearly gone,
And you've sung your swan song,
And going seems right when it once seemed wrong;
Go, pride of our race,
You have won your place,
So climb to your God with a smiling face.

October 1918.

THE SHRINE OF GUADALUPE

WHEN I read a Spanish dateline in my morning's
Daily-News,

I've a feeling that significance would lend
To tradition oft repeated at the Chapel of the Well,
That he who drinks its water must return to drink
again.

Down the dusty old calzada, road of prayer for many
years,

With its fourteen sacred stations and its trees,
I could see to Guadalupe and the Chapel of the Well,
And I'd go just like the shriners, on my knees.

I'd be again with Indians, devout and picturesque,
Hear their tales about the Virgin and the Well,
And maybe I believe it for I've kissed her image there,
And bought the sacred relics that they sell.

There's a charm in Guadalupe that no other shrine can
boast,

Neither Mecca, river Ganges, or historical Nikko,
And it makes one more religious to be a pilgrim there,
In this holy of the holies in the heart of Mexico.

LUCIFER SPEAKS

CARRY this word to your people
Bowed down with age-old pain;
Tell them the rebel angel
Has preached the word — attain.

Tell them, though thunder beat me,
Unconquered, I did not swerve,
And say that Lucifer, evil arch-angel,
Was one who would not serve.

Carry this word to your people,
Some of the wise may see;
Tell them that Lucifer made a war
That all men might be free.

Teach men the truth, ye prophets,
Show them the light and the way,
Say that old values cannot live
In the dawn of our newer day.

Tell men to fight for freedom,
Strength comes as a nation strives;
Tell them a strong man will not affirm
The least of a tyrant's lies.

Carry this word to your people,
For the weak there yawns a grave;
Tell them that Lucifer's glorious sin
Was refusing to be a slave.

Tell them that good is not evil,
Tell them that fools are not wise;
Say that the truths of one nation
May be another's lies.

Teach men to be free spirits,
As free as I, who know
That slaves must bear the burdens,
Must reap what tyrants sow.

TO MUSIC

WHISPER to me of unreached goals,
Of dreams to end in ecstasy,
Of colors mad, conglomerate,
That have uncertain hue;
Of charms and lures, of promises fulfilled,
Ideas that soar and sweep immensity,
Chaotic, mystic, but magnificent.
Whisper again of things I seek in vain,
Hard silence brings reality, and pain.

PRAYER OF AN EGOIST

MAKE me, Ye Gods, an exceptional soul,
Grant me a spiritual health;
Give me, Ye Gods, the will to believe
In all as in myself.

Give me, Ye Gods, the courage
To live without disgust,
Elbow to elbow with a slave,
(Gloved fingers in the dust).

Deliver me, Gods, from democracy,
(The way to the heights is clear),
Deliver me, Gods, from sympathy
And tyranny of fear.

Teach me, Ye Gods, true values,
(On lofty mountains I stand),
Show me, Ye Gods, reality,
Make me a superman.

MARIQUITA

WHEN I first saw Mariquita
She was seventeen, and sweeter
Than the dulces that she offered me, you know;
I told her she was stunning,
And that soon I'd be returning
To the tropic land where red naranjas grow.

Oh, that girl, my Mariquita,
I never found one neater,
With any grace or charm that she did lack;
In northern lands I traveled,
While fifteen years unraveled,
Before I had a chance to beat it back.

She had changed, had Mariquita,
And her man had likely beat her,
For her nose had sorter overspread her face;
She was dirty, she was flabby,
Her scanty clothes were shabby,
And she'd aged like other women of her race.

When I then saw Mariquita
You may bet I didn't meet her
Selling "Dulces of Celaya" in the street;

She was thirty-two and fatter,
And I couldn't stand the latter,
For she wobbled like a walrus on her feet.

.

You guys with Mariquitas,
Haunting parks like lotus eaters,
Remember how they change in later life;
If you're feeling hunches, stop it,
Shut your eyes, my son, and drop it,
Beat it home, my boy, and get yourself a wife.

GYPSY SONG

WE carry a load on the open road,
Cares you have, have we;
Yet fine and rare is the salt-tanged air
That blows in from the sea.

Our hearts are rife with love and life,
And beaten roads lead far;
The roads are home for we who roam,
Born under our patron's star.

We still know fear and it's not clear
Why fate must drive us on ;
There's thought of tomorrow, cares and sorrow,
Our life's not all a song.

We enjoy the hour but bow to more power
Than that of wind and rain;
We trade and we deal, and buy more than steal
What we need of ripened grain.

When the moon swings low we come and go,
Poor tramps that pass in the night,
Yet there's tax to pay and laws that say
What's wrong and what is right.

On a silvery night when stars are bright
Beauty surrounds like a flood;
And on the road, though we bear our load,
We cherish our gypsy blood.

A PRAYER

I ASK not forgiveness, Lord, nor health,
Nor strength nor mercy at Thy hand;
But grant me faith, sincere and true ,
Faith in my fellowman.

I see, O Lord, the wonder of Thy work;
I question not the purpose nor the plan;
Just give me faith in children of the world,
Faith in my fellowman.

THE DEVIL'S PLAN

“HO! Ho!” cried the Devil,
“Things seek their level,
I have found God’s buried gold.
I will teach man to mine it,
To coin it and prize it,
Above his immortal soul.”

When the tempter so wise
Held aloft this prize,
Men came and saw and fell.
“Ho! Ho!” cried the Devil,
“With God’s own metal
I will people my kingdom of hell.”

“I will win the poor fools
With their Lord’s own tools,
And make men subjects of mine ;
Their souls will be won
And the Father and Son
Will be tricked as in Adam’s time.”

“The people think wrong
But a herd is strong,
And rules the few with a rod ;
I have played to win,
That the Devil of sin
May yet be the Holy God.”

WE DREAMERS

WE are the dreamers of dreams,
 Whiling the years away,
The tenderest dreams we have
 Are born of our saddest day.

Like receding waters of old,
 Tempting our souls to the end;
Like forbidden fruit we behold
 The crying needs of men.

FREE LOVE

WE met today.
Bowed down I walk in pain;
No mad desire or bitterness it is,
But spells of old emotions play,
And make low, husky, trembling speech,
Hot hands, dry lips, and misty eyes.

We met today,
And love so long thought dead
Stirred, as to prove its dormancy
Was waiting only for a little word
To make it flash to burning heat again,
To make a wreck of hope I've built upon.

We met today,
And passed with nod and smile,
Indifferent, so carelessly we smiled;
Yet slow I walk and struggle for control,
To crush anew what cannot be denied,
To rise above a longing I must hide.

We met today,
So casual none could see
This heart-ache and misery of ours;
With time perhaps, perhaps forgetfulness,
Until we pass again with nod and smile,
To pay the price for what they say is free.

PERFECT LAWS

THERE are Laws of Life and Love,
Never Loss without a Gain,
And Light has ever Shadow,
As Pleasure speaks of Pain.

There are Laws of Time and Space,
Never Growth without Decay,
For every Good there's Evil,
For every Night, a Day.

BIRDS OF FAR PASSAGE

BOBOLINK! Bobolink!
Singing in springtime,
Rippling and jolly
In the far north;
Gay-colored, brilliant,
While you are nesting,
Drab as the sparrow
As summer comes on.

Bobolink! Bobolink!
Birds of far passage,
When colored as sparrows
Known as reed birds;
And in the autumn,
There in the rice fields,
Feeding in Georgia,
Known as rice birds.

Bobolink! Bobolink!
From Nova Scotia,
Stopping in rice fields
On your way south;
Gone to a refuge,
South of the Amazon,
Bobolink! Bobolink!
Winter has come.

TO A MOUNTAIN GIRL

THOSE eyes! Those eyes!
Deep and true and clear and gray,
Where mysteries dwell and love lights play,
Eyes that haunt by night and day,
Soft and tender, wistful, or gay,
Voicing thoughts your lips would say.

Those eyes! Those eyes!
Showing your soul in every plight,
Golden with love or wide with fright,
Dull in despair, or flashing bright
As they sweep from valley to mountain height,
Eyes that can lure to wrong or right.

Those eyes! Those eyes!
Too true and frank to practice art,
Too slow to drop or quick to dart,
Tearful or startled they stare or start,
Eyes that have never assumed a part,
Eyes that mirror your inmost heart.

THE CASTANETS

I'VE heard the Russians singing
As they swung by Chinese walls,
And felt my soul go winging
With the yellow bugle calls.

I've heard the tom-toms beating
In the mystic, purple East,
And flute notes faintly reaching
To the desert from the street.

I've heard old banjos thumping
Negro tunes no one forgets,
But sounds that set me dreaming
Come from the castanets.

ENCELADUS

SOME poet said, Enceladus is dead.
That titan lives, though God confines
Such mighty, individual souls as his.

Live on, brave rebel, strive on to the last,
Unconquered, bold as in the ages past;
Work at thy fetters with thy super strength,
Heave hard, stand forth, and seek the heights;
Find God again, defy, and claim thy rights.

GO, AND SIN NO MORE

DO not despair, my sister, though you sin,
Whatever one loses one may win;
The angels in heaven sinned and many fell,
While a crucified thief was saved from hell.

Do not despair, my daughter, just be strong;
The ones who are right are weak if never wrong.
You sold your body for a price in gold,
Which bought from Judas a saint's immortal soul.

Be ever strong, my sister, clean and brave;
Who sees the saint must also see the slave;
Remember, sister, what the master said before,
"Go thou, my daughter; go, and sin no more."

THE COWMAN IS FED-UP

I SAY I'm fed-up on the spectacled highbrows
Who parade with the women and spill all the
beans,

Organizers of clubs to advance truth and culture,
Who collect up the dues and leave 'em some dreams.

And too I'm fed-up on your gold-tipped society,
Where the lion of an evening is really an ass,
Where women forget what apparel was made for,
And babies, Lord help us, are things of the past.

And, more, I'm fed-up on your rare art exhibits,
Where you can't tell a forest from storms on the sea;
But the people mill in, pretending they like it,
The whole crowd at large, when they oughtn't to be.

I'm also fed-up on the school of free poetry,
But the best people like it, and so I have read
What brings to my mind one hombre's mad ravings,
When stampeding cattle had kicked-in his head.

I'm herding with folks who have strayed from the pas-
ture,
And a question arises and sure troubles me:
What must a man do to be adjudged crazy?
Who goes to asylums when such folks are free?

ON A RING

A GIRL of sentiment was she
Who gave this little gift to me,
A tiny band of purest gold,
A ring she wore when three years old.

And I swear that I will cherish
Till my fondest memories perish,
The sentiment and the token
Of her sometime tender love.

FROM AN IVORY TOWER

MY lips once whispered love to you,
My hot hands stroked your hair,
But I never spoke of marriage;
How could I, a dreamer, care?

You said you would love me ever,
As long as your heart had life;
I know how well you meant that,
Though you are another's wife.

For I went the way of a dreamer,
Down rose-colored paths to my soul,
And I built me an ivory tower,
In a garden of pearl and gold.

And now in my ivory tower
I dream through the lonely morns;
My garden is fresh with roses,
I gather and feel the thorns.

And you also are weeping,
Though strong and brave and true;
For your heart would reach the tower,
And my garden agleam in the dew.

This, then, is the old, sad story
Of a love that will not die;
But we both prize honor and duty,
Though it means to live a lie.

Behold here the way of a dreamer,
The way of a selfish soul,
To build his house of heart-aches
And call it pearl and gold.

THE MEXICAN WEST COAST

OLD church of Nuestra Señora, Moorish, Persian-
domed, grey;

White beach, green palms, plazas, bright sky, and
Guaymas bay;

Off to the east the Sierras, snow-capped, color-mad,
bold,

The seal brown of the foothills a setting of ham-
mered gold.

Cathedral bells and music, soft borne on perfumed air,
Metal-tongued muezzins calling to vespers and to
prayer;

Blue sky and cobalt water, quaint little port of San
Blas;

Gold-laced toreadors, peons, pearl divers from La Paz.

A brown old tramp at anchor, a steamer ablaze with
light,

Ship's bells, oar locks creaking, "La Paloma"—and
the night.

Bright plaza, vari-hued blankets, castanets, dancers,
love;

The joy of life is living, warm blood, warm sky above.

The low Spanish-Moorish houses, the Cora pueblas up
higher

Where dwell the bearded Indios, devout as their
catholic friar;

Goats, donkeys, parrots, flowers, birds, sunshine, chil-
dren at play;

Perpetual summer, lotus land, dream night and per-
fect day.

A SEA GRAVE

THIS is a story a sailor told me,
A sailor we buried out at sea ;
His race and name I never knew,
It may be false or it may be true,
But such as it is I write for you.

My story is old and was never told,
For it touches a sovereign line :
I was the son of the guilty one,
But the blame of it all was mine.

I did not care the guilt to share,
But shouldered the disgrace ;
The blame was laid, the price was paid
When I fled from the royal place.

The end has come and all is done,
And life will go by tomorrow ;
On the sea I roam, I'll die unknown,
And take to the grave my sorrow.

Here on my breast leave when I rest
This emblem of deeds I've done ;
Don't take it away but let it stay,
It's a war cross that I won.

There are none to cry when cold I lie
Where shame and the winds have driven,
And the prince so black cannot go back
Though crowns of the world be given.

Few will miss and none will kiss,
No one will mourn for me;
No bell shall toll, my lonely soul
Will ship on another sea.

On the rocky reefs that down in the deeps
Are the resting place of the dead,
I will find a place and pillow my face,
And sleep on a coral bed.

THUS I WOULD BUILD

I WOULD build
A vast house on lofty mountains;
Neither temple, pagoda, nor church;
More sacred still.
I would build without a doubt,
Without a creed for men to heed
I would build
My vast house, my mighty dome,
On lofty mountains.
I would build for all who will,
Freedom's sacred fane.

A TOAST

RED is the wine, and my glass overflowing
I hold aloft for a toast;
Gone are the old, but the new friends are coming,
And I am to play the host.

Red is the wine, deep-hued and sparkling,
Strong as my faith in the new;
I filled up my cup as the old friends were going,
And I drink, new friends, to you.

